

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for dynamically updating software stored on one or more installation media for installation on at least one destination machine, said method comprising:  
obtaining update content from one or more update media remote from the destination machine; and  
merging the update content at the destination machine with the software on the installation media prior to installing the software on the destination machine.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein obtaining update content comprises obtaining update content from one or more media remote from the destination machine via a network.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the network is the Internet.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the update content includes at least one file.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the update content includes a patch.
6. The method of claim 5, wherein the patch modifies the software on the installation media prior to installation on the destination machine.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein the update content includes a driver for controlling hardware on the destination machine.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein obtaining update content comprises:  
analyzing hardware or software or both on the destination machine; and  
obtaining, from the one or more update media remote from the destination machine, update content specific to the analyzed hardware or software or both on the destination machine.

9. One or more computer readable media having computer-executable instructions for performing the method recited in claim 8.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the software comprises operating system software or application program software or both.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein merging the update content with the software comprises one of the following: patching, replacing, and adding to the software on the one or more installation media.

12. The method of claim 1, further comprising extracting at least one file from the update content.

13. The method of claim 1, further comprising pre-processing the update content in preparation for installation.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the software comprises one or more files, and further comprising searching the update content for each of the files, and searching the one or more installation media for each of the files not found in the update content.

15. The method of claim 14, further comprising specifying a key in a registry to automate installation of the updated software.

16. One or more computer readable media having computer-executable instructions for performing the method recited in claim 14.

17. A system for dynamically updating software with update content, said system comprising:

an update site for delivering the update content to a destination machine having access to at least one installation medium storing installation data; and

an installation application program operating on the destination machine to receive the update content from the update site and to merge the received update content with the installation data on the installation medium prior to installing the installation data on the destination machine.

18. The system of claim 17, wherein the installation application program installs updated installation data on the destination machine.

19. The system of claim 17, wherein the update content comprises one or more files.

20. The system of claim 17, wherein the update site is accessible via a telecommunications medium.

21. The system of claim 20, wherein the telecommunications medium is a medium selected from a group consisting of the Internet, a telephone network, and a local area network.

22. The system of claim 17, wherein the update content comprises at least one replacement file.

23. The system of claim 22, wherein the replacement file comprises an update to the installation data or to the installation application program or both.

24. The system of claim 17, wherein the update content comprises at least one driver.

25. One or more computer-readable media having one or more computer-executable components for dynamically updating software on an installation medium prior to installation of the software on a destination machine, said components comprising an updating component on the destination machine for obtaining update

content from a source remote from the destination machine and applying the update content to the software to update the software prior to installation of the software.

26. The computer-readable medium of claim 25 having further computer-executable components comprising a repository component for storing the update content and delivering the update content to the updating component.

27. The computer-readable medium of claim 26, wherein a communications medium connects the updating component and the repository component.

28. The computer-readable medium of claim 27, wherein the communications medium is the Internet.

29. The computer-readable medium of claim 25, wherein the update content includes one or more files selected from a group consisting of drivers, replacement files, and patches.

30. The computer-readable medium of claim 25, wherein the update content comprises one or more files, and wherein the updating component includes routines for:

- analyzing hardware or software or both on the destination machine;
- requesting at least one of the files related to the analyzed hardware or software or both;
- receiving the requested files; and
- applying the received, requested files to the software on the installation medium.

31. The computer-readable medium of claim 25 having further computer-executable components comprising an installing component for installing the updated software on the destination machine.

32. The computer-readable medium of claim 31, wherein the update content supersedes the software on the installation medium during installation.

33. The computer-readable medium of claim 25 having further computer-executable components comprising a publishing component for identifying and verifying the update content.

34. A system for dynamically updating software on one or more installation media for installation on at least one destination machine, said system comprising:

means for obtaining update content from one or more update media remote from the destination machine; and

means for merging the update content with the software on the installation media prior to installing the software on the destination machine.

35. The system of claim 34, wherein the software comprises operating system software or application program software or both.